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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 002382

SIPDIS

ENERGY FOR CAROLYN GAY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT YAR'ADUA

Classified By: CDA Lisa Piascik for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: During a November 12 meeting at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte and Nigerian President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua pledged to continue and deepen the U.S.-Nigerian bilateral partnership. The Deputy Secretary praised the Yar'Adua government's commitment to electoral reform, anti-corruption efforts, and enforcing the rule of law and said that the U.S. is ready to provide technical assistance if so requested. President Yar'Adua announced he will propose an African counterterrorism initiative at the African Union summit in January. He also pledged to improve Gulf of Guinea security and asked for U.S. technical assistance to improve monitoring. The Deputy Secretary thanked the Nigerians for their efforts to bring peace to Darfur, and urged President Yar'Adua to continue to press President Bashir to accept deployment of the UN-AU hybrid force as soon as possible. President Yar'Adua restated the GON's commitment to send a peacekeeping battalion to Somalia and promised the troops could be deployed by the end of the year. END SUMMARY.

Robust Partnership, Domestic Reforms

12. (C) President Yar'Adua said Nigeria wants to deepen our already positive relationship and partner with the U.S. on a wide array of issues. The Deputy Secretary praised the Yar'Adua government's commitment to electoral reform, anti-corruption efforts and enforcing the rule of law, and said that the U.S. is ready to provide technical assistance if so requested. The President thanked the Deputy Secretary for U.S. support and explained that an election reform panel has been inaugurated and started work. He admitted that electoral reform was a great national challenge, but said that it can help provide long term stability, peace, and security for Nigeria. President Yar'Adua reiterated his commitment to pursuing reforms that will improve governance, fight corruption, and ensure strict adherence to the rule of law. He explained that he is committed to using the African Union's Peer Review Mechanism as a self-critique to improve governance. He re-stated Nigeria's commitment to the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and said that in addition to political stability, good governance, and rule of law, infrastructure improvements are needed for economic growth and poverty reduction. According to President Yar'Adua, Nigeria requires additional foreign direct investment in order to improve critical power and transport

infrastructure and achieve double-digit economic growth. President Yar'Adua sees the U.S. as a "natural partner" to help Nigeria improve its economy.

Counterterrorism

¶3. (C) President Yar'Adua said the GON takes terrorism very seriously. He explained that he wants Nigeria to link with other African nations, especially Chad and Niger, to ensure that the region does not become a haven for terrorist cells or training camps. The President said that the GON is working hard to identify and infiltrate any terrorist groups already present in Nigeria. President Yar'Adua announced that he will propose a continental initiative to combat terrorism at an African Union meeting in Addis Ababa in January.

Niger Delta

¶4. (C) The President explained that the GON is working hard to make the Gulf of Guinea secure. He said the government needs technical assistance to ensure there is "proper monitoring" to secure the Gulf for Nigeria and its trading partners. The Deputy Secretary agreed Gulf of Guinea security is a major priority for both the United States and Nigeria. He said he had discussed the Gulf of Guinea in more detail in his previous meeting with the National Security Advisor and that he would continue to think about ways the USG could intensify our assistance on Gulf security, perhaps with regard to combating bunkering and small arms trafficking.

Peacekeeping: Darfur, Somalia

¶5. (C) President Yar'Adua said his Foreign and Defense Ministers had just met with President Bashir and he was planning to meet with Bashir himself on Sunday. The Deputy Secretary thanked Yar'Adua for his personal engagement on Sudan and said he was pleased to learn about the upcoming Yar'Adua-Bashir meeting. He urged the President to tell Bashir that he has nothing to lose or fear by welcoming the international community's involvement in Darfur peacekeeping as soon as possible. The Deputy stressed the need to get Bashir to remove any remaining obstacles to deployment of the UN-AU hybrid force as soon as possible. President Yar'Adua pledged to continue working with the Sudanese government and the African Union to get the situation resolved and allow additional peacekeepers to deploy. The Deputy Secretary pointed out that if President Bashir would agree to quick deployment of peacekeepers, including non-AU technical units, this would lead to a rapid improvement in Sudan's international relations.

¶6. (C) President Yar'Adua promised that the GON will meet its commitment to send a battalion of peacekeeping troops to Somalia, but he explained that the Nigerian military is "overstretched" which has caused delays and problems in training and equipping the pledged unit. Assistant Secretary Frazer stressed the importance of quickly replacing Ethiopian troops in Somalia and she thanked President Yar'Adua for the GON's partnership and leadership on peacekeeping. She explained that the USG is ready to provide \$3 million to help equip and deploy the pledged Nigerian battalion. President Yar'Adua said he will tell the Minister of Defense and Chief of Defense Staff to get the Somalia battalion ready as soon as possible and he promised that the Nigerian peacekeepers should be deployed no later than the end of December 2007. A/S Frazer told President Yar'Adua that the AU and members of the International Crisis Group on Somalia need time to reflect on the UNSYG's unexpected recent announcement that the UN will not send a peacekeeping force to Somalia, and instead called for a multinational force or coalition of willing forces.

¶7. (C) Yar'Adua pledged that he would discuss plans for an African Standby Force (ASF) with the African Union Chairman. He stressed the importance of making the ASF a reality, so that the AU would be able to quickly deploy peacekeepers and prevent conflicts from spiraling out of control. The Deputy Secretary offered his support for the ASF concept and promised to think about ways the USG might support it.

Health Note

¶8. (C) Though President Yar'Adua was well-informed and spoke confidently without notes during the hour long meeting, he appeared to be in ill-health. He spoke with effort at times, repeatedly coughed, and seemed less energetic than in previous meetings and public appearances. END NOTE.

Participants

¶9. (SBU)

United States:
The Deputy Secretary
Assistant Secretary Frazer
CDA Lisa Piascik
Gustavo Delgado, D Staff
Ted Wittenstein, D Staff
PolCouns
EconCouns
Embassy Notetaker

Nigeria:

President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua
Vice President Goodluck Jonathan
Secretary to the Government of the Federation Babagana Kingibe
Chief of Staff General Mohammed
National Security Advisor General Abdullahi Mukhtar
Minister of Foreign Affairs Ojo Maduekwe
Attorney General Michael Aondokka
Deputy Chief of Staff from the Vice President's Office
Special Advisor to the President on Media Segun Adeniyi
EFCC Chairman Nuhu Ribadu
MFA Permanent Secretary Hakeem Baba-Ahmed
MFA Director for North America and the Caribbean O.O. Onobu
MFA Director for North America Charles Onianwa
MFA Asst. Director for the U.S. Ali Ocheni
MFA Director of Protocol T.O. Aje

¶10. (U) The Deputy Secretary's staff has cleared this message.

PIASCIK